



The Mini Page

Betty Debnam, Founding Editor and Editor at Large



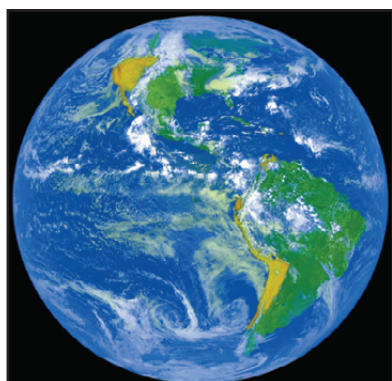
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We Are ...

The Green Generation

Next year, in 2010, the world will observe the 40th anniversary of Earth Day. The celebration begins this year on Earth Day, April 22.



NASA photo

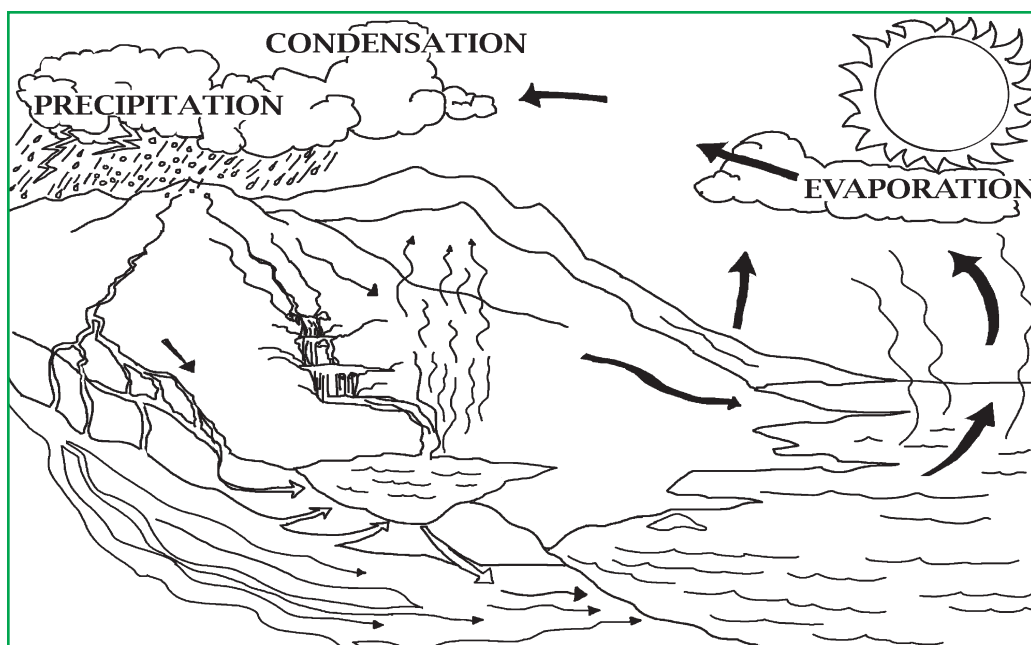
One of the goals of Earth Day over the next year is to encourage people of all ages and nationalities to become part of a "green generation." This means:

- ending our need for **fossil fuels***, including coal;
- making each of us more responsible for what we **consume**, or use;
- creating "green" jobs and making our schools more environmentally friendly.

*Fossil fuels are made from the remains of plants and animals that lived millions of years ago. These fuels include oil and natural gas.

Water wise

Of course, there's much more to being "green." In honor of Earth Day 2009, The Mini Page talked to experts at Earth Day Network about one of our planet's most valuable resources: water.



Color this water cycle diagram and hang it in your room or classroom to remind you to conserve our precious water!

The water cycle

Nature recycles water over and over again. Here's how it works:



1. The sun shines on lakes, rivers, streams and oceans. Heat turns water into invisible water vapor. This is called *evaporation*.



2. The vapor rises into the sky, where it cools. When it gets cold enough, the vapor turns into clouds. This is *condensation*.



3. The clouds get cooler. Tiny drops of water vapor turn into rain, snow, sleet or hail. We call this *precipitation*.



4. Most precipitation falls back into the ocean, but some falls on land. Most of the water eventually finds its way back into the ocean through rivers and underground sources.

The cycle starts over again.

Water by the numbers

- 70 percent of our planet is water.
- 97 percent of that water is salt water.
- 2 percent of our water is frozen in glaciers or ice caps.
- Less than 1 percent of the Earth's water is freshwater that we can drink.

Water = Life

Every living thing on Earth needs water to survive. Humans can live only about three days without water.

But humans and animals can't drink salt water from the oceans. So we have to **conserve**, or save, water when we can.

Water in Our World

Our planet needs water for many different things.

- Plants, both wild and farmed, need water to grow.
- Animals, including humans, need water to live.
- We use water for manufacturing products.
- We use water for transportation on rivers, lakes and oceans.

Why a shortage?

If we are using the same water over and over, why are we running out? Experts say there are two reasons:

1. **Supply** — The amount of water may be the same, but the quality is worse. More pollutants in water today may make it unsafe to drink.

2. **Demand** — We use 70 percent of our water for growing crops. The Earth has more and more people all the time. The way we use our water is affecting how much we have available.

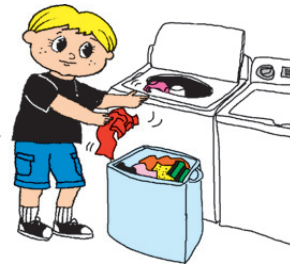


photo by Gene Alexander, USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service

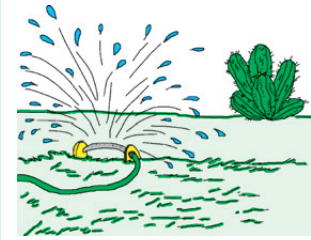
How do we use water at home?

People in the United States are used to having and using a lot of water.

- Our appliances that use water, such as washing machines and dishwashers, may be **inefficient**, or wasteful.



- Many of our toilets, especially older ones, may use more water than is necessary.



- In dry areas, such as the Southwest, people may still use a lot of water to grow grass lawns.

- Even in the Northeast and Northwest, where there is more water, people can be wasteful in using it.

Water treatment

Filtering, or cleaning, our water uses a lot of energy. When we waste treated water, we are sending not just water but energy costs down the drain.

Water worries

Drinking **contaminated**, or polluted, water can make people very sick. Around the world, more children under the age of 5 die from water-related diseases than from any other cause. About one out of every six people on the planet is not able to get clean water.

These problems are the most serious in Africa, southern Asia and South America.

Getting clean water

The water you drink probably comes from a water treatment plant. It is filtered before it is sent out to your house or school.

But in many parts of the world, people drink water straight from ponds or streams. The water may contain germs or small creatures that make people sick.



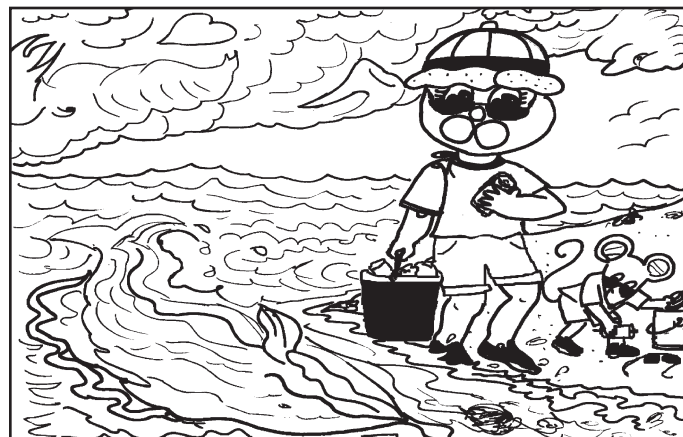
This boy in the Democratic Republic of Congo carries water, probably for cooking, drinking or bathing.

photo by Ken Wiegand, courtesy USAID

Mini Spy ...



Mini Spy and Alpha Mouse are cleaning up the beach. See if you can find:



- elephant
- tooth
- word MINI
- peanut
- snake
- bowl
- man's face
- whale • bell
- heart



Earth Day

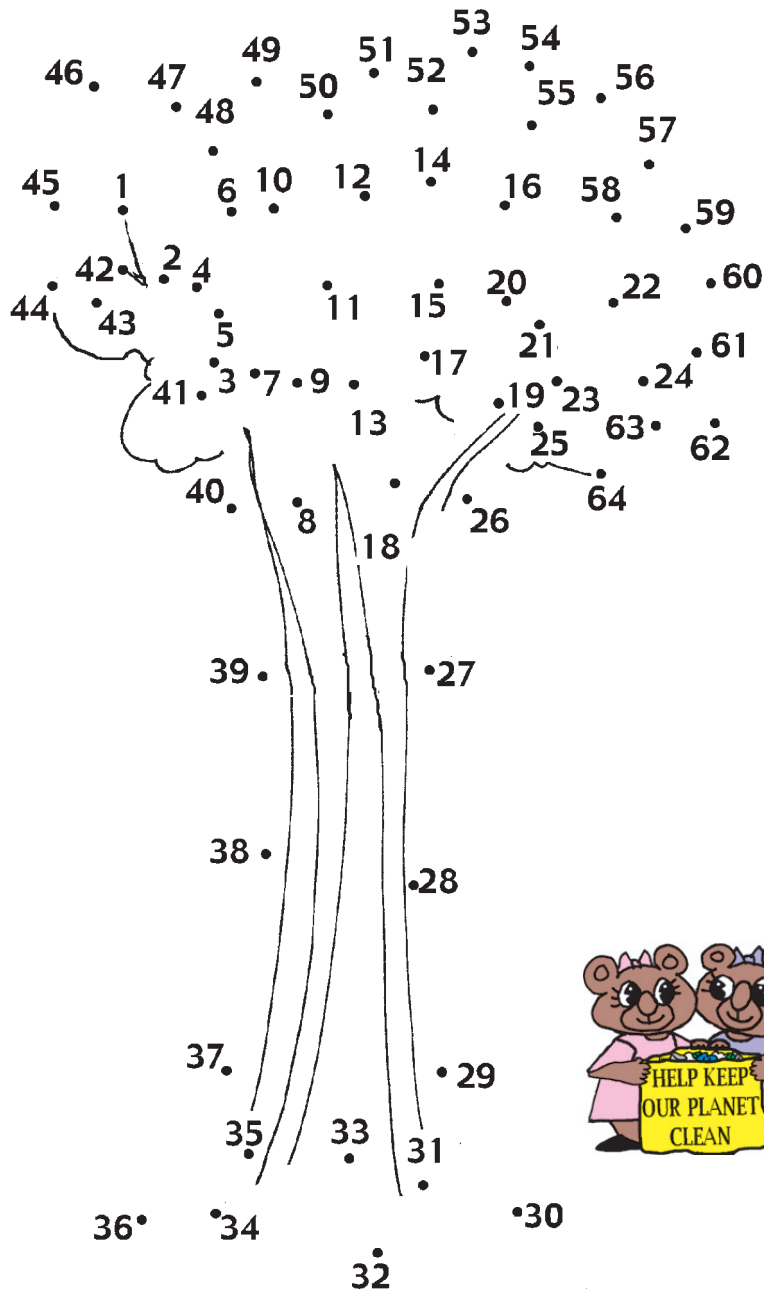
TRY 'N FIND

Words that remind us of Earth Day and water are hidden in the block below. Some words are hidden backward, and some letters are used twice. See if you can find: GENERATION, ANNIVERSARY, EARTH, DAY, GREEN, DRIP, RESOURCE, WATER, CYCLE, EVAPORATION, CONDENSATION, DRINK, PRECIPITATION, CONSERVE, CONTAMINATED, BACTERIA, COLD, NUTRIENT, NELSON.



C O N T A M I N A T E D R I P
E C G J Y R A S R E V I N N A
C O R E T A W T N E I R T U N
R N E L S O N A I R E T C A B
U S E C O N D E N S A T I O N
O E N Y A D R I N K H T R A E
S R Q C B N O I T A R E N E G
E V A P O R A T I O N D L O C
R E N O I T A T I P I C E R P

Go dot to dot and color.



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Rookie Cookie's Recipe Veggie Bean Casserole

You'll need:

- 1 red bell pepper, slivered
- 1 cup diced fresh tomatoes
- 1 cup sliced celery
- 2 teaspoons olive oil
- 1 tablespoon Italian seasoning
- 1/4 teaspoon garlic powder
- 1 (16-ounce) can kidney beans
- 2 tablespoons grated parmesan cheese

What to do:

1. In a bowl, toss the red pepper, tomatoes and celery with olive oil.
2. Sprinkle seasoning and garlic powder over mixture. Place in a medium-sized baking pan.
3. Bake at 375 degrees for 30 minutes; stir after 15 minutes.
4. Stir in kidney beans and return to oven for 10 minutes.
5. Sprinkle cheese on top before serving.

**You will need an adult's help with this recipe.*



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Meet Alexander Ludwig

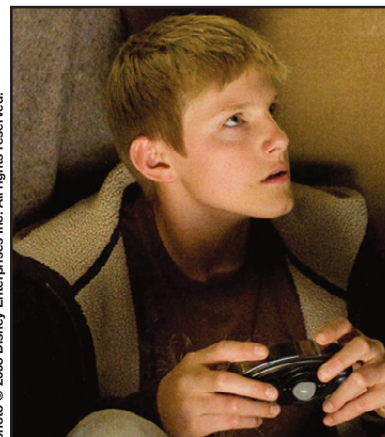


photo © 2008 Disney Enterprises Inc. All rights reserved.

Alexander Ludwig, 16, stars as Seth in the Disney movie "Race to Witch Mountain." He has starred in several movies, including "Air Bud: World Pup" and "The Sandlot III." He began acting in TV commercials when he was 10 years old.

Alexander lives in Vancouver, British Columbia, Canada, with his two sisters, one brother and parents.

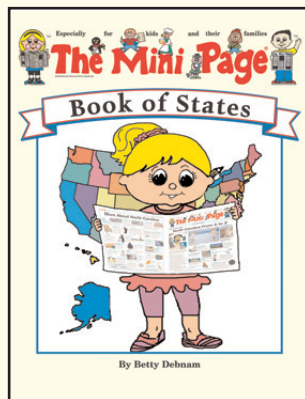
He loves outdoor activities, including snow skiing, surfing, water skiing, tennis and ice hockey. He also enjoys playing the guitar.

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NEW!

The Mini Page® Book of States

The Mini Page's popular series of issues about each state is collected here in a 156-page softcover book. Conveniently spiral-bound for ease of use, this invaluable resource contains A-to-Z facts about each state, along with the District of Columbia. Illustrated with colorful photographs and art, and complete with updated information, The Mini Page Book of States will be a favorite in classrooms and homes for years to come.



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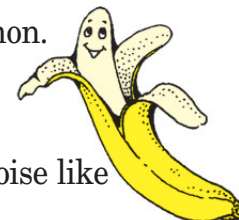
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MIGHTY
FUNNY'S

Mini Jokes

All the following jokes have something in common. Can you guess the common theme or category?



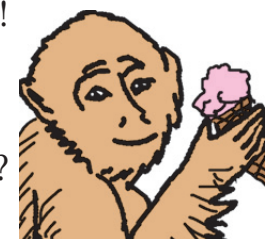
James: How do you catch a monkey?

Turner: Hang upside down and make a noise like a banana!



Crystal: How do you record a monkey's voice?

Jackie: With an ape recorder!



Page: What is a monkey's favorite ice cream?

Lucy: Chocolate chimp!

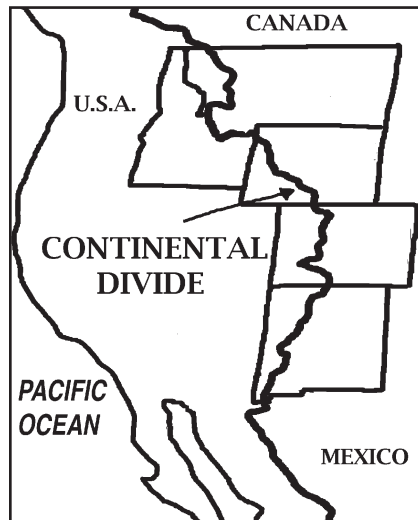
The Conservation Generation

Where is our water?

Most of the water we use comes from a **watershed**. This is an area of land that drains into a certain body of water.

A group of watersheds in the same area is called a **basin**. The largest basin in the United States is the Mississippi River Basin.

When it rains or snows, water lands in creeks, streams and rivers. Tall ridges divide land so that on one side of the ridge, the water runs in one direction, and on the other side it runs in the other direction.



In the Americas, the Continental Divide separates the watersheds that drain into the Atlantic and Pacific oceans. The divide starts in Alaska and continues into South America.

Pollutants

When pollutants get into our water upstream, they harm the quality of water downstream.

Dirt can wash into rivers and streams when it rains. It can kill fish and small animals.

Bacteria are germs and viruses that make people sick. They are spread when sewer systems don't work properly or animal wastes get into the water.

Some **nutrients**, such as nitrogen, pollute the water. They come from fertilizers and animal waste.



photo by Kim Neunch/Earth Day Network

Being "green" can seem like a big job. But there are so many things kids can do to conserve and protect our resources.

Students at Ellis Elementary School in Denver help participate in a landscaping project for Earth Day 2008.

In your city, Earth Day may be observed on another day close to April 22. Look in your newspaper for Earth Day events you might want to help with.

You can make a difference

According to experts, our planet's water situation is better than it was 30 years ago. But we still have room to improve.

The Mini Page offers some ideas to start with on your own or with family or friends.

Talk with your family about ways to save water at home. Make a poster for your bathroom, kitchen or laundry room that reminds you to save water.

You might include these tips:



- Tell your parents about leaking faucets or toilets. A small drip from a faucet can waste 75 liters (almost 20 gallons) of water a day.

- Take short showers. For a tub bath, don't fill the tub all the way up.



- Turn off the water while washing your hands or brushing your teeth.



- Don't overwater the plants or grass in your yard.

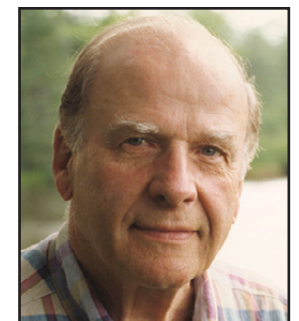
- Put water in the refrigerator to chill it instead of running the faucet until it's cold.



- Dispose of pollutants properly. Don't pour them down the drain or put them in the trash.

Earth Day

Earth Day was started in 1970 by Gaylord Nelson, a U.S. senator from Wisconsin. He received the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 1995 for his environmental work. He died in 2005.



Gaylord Nelson

Sites to see: <http://pbskids.org/go>

Earth Day ideas:
<http://earthday.net/files/getactivewithyourkids.pdf>

Kids' Carbon Footprint Calculator:
<http://zerofootprint.net/youth/neew>

The Mini Page thanks Caitlin Werrell, director of international programs, Earth Day Network, for help with this issue.

Next week, The Mini Page is about the art of the New Deal in the 1930s.

The Mini Page Staff

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